

Digital Switching Expansion Project

Project Summary

Subsector	Telecommunication
Location	11 Major Cities Nationwide
Project Cost	\$25.6 Million
Project Type	Digital Switching Expansion
Project Executing Firm/Agency	Ministry of Communications
Financing Agency /	Government of Afghanistan /
Procurement Agency	Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACA)



Project Outline

The Ministry of Communications is embarking on a colossal project to update and modernize Afghanistan's telecommunication system. The Ministry has identified 21 priority projects that will establish an effective communications infrastructure for the Government to remain stable, to promote national unity, to aid in conflict resolution, and to demobilize and to reintegrate of former combatants.

Technical Description

The project will provide urgently needed upgrades to the local telephone exchange by switching from an analogue system to a digital system in Kabul. Additionally it will add new capacity in Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar, Kunduz and 2nd tier cities.

The switching project in Kabul will include two phases. The first phase would convert a 12,000-line switched analogue system to a digital system. The second phase would add 15,000 new lines. The current analog switching system in Kabul is not capable of being integrated into any new telecommunication infrastructure. A digital switching system would produce several benefits including meeting urgent needs to support the reconstruction effort, allow communication between existing analogue and new digital systems, as well as generate immediate revenues for cost recovery.

For the cities of Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar, Kunduz, and the 2nd tier cities the project will focus on introducing digital wireless local loop switching. This is a priority because phone service is extremely limited and internet is currently not available.

Project Site

The project site includes Kabul plus five Tier I cities: Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar and Kunduz.

The Tier II Cities are: Pul-i-khumry, Parawan, Juzjan, Khost, Ghazni, Faryab, Takhar, Helmand, Badakhshan, Paktitya and Faraha.

Project Status/Timeline

An internal MOC feasibility study has been completed and the ministry is preparing the engineering design and bid materials. The target is to issue a tender in the 3rd quarter of 2003. The project is expected to begin the 4th quarter of 2003 and to take 6 months to complete.

Equipment and Services

The following equipment is required for this project:

- Turnkey digital switching capacity for Kabul (27,000 lines)
- Turnkey CDMA Wireless local loop systems totaling 36,000 lines

U.S. Competitiveness

The U.S. is a leader in telecommunications and satellite related equipment. China and Korea will be major competitors. The U.S. can however be successful in providing high quality at competitive prices.

Project Financing

The Ministry of Communications has requested \$25.6 million from the Government of Afghanistan to fund this project and it is anticipated that the government will fund this project. A portion of this financing will be generated by the MOC through pre-booking line installation fees.

Conclusion

The goal of the proposed telecommunications project is to rebuild and retrain the telecommunications sector to support social cohesion, private investment and economic growth.

Key Decision Makers

Organization or Company Name	Ministry of Communications
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